

All of us have the freedom to pray and exercise our faiths openly. Our laws protect these God-given liberties, and rightly so. Today and every day, prayers will be offered in houses of worship, at community gatherings, in our homes, and in neighborhoods all across our country. Let us give thanks for the freedom to practice our faith as we see fit, whether individually or in fellowship.

On this day, let us remember in our thoughts and prayers all those affected by recent events, such as the Boston Marathon bombings, the Newtown, Connecticut shootings, and the explosion in West, Texas. Let us pray for the police officers, firefighters, and other first responders who put themselves in harm's way to protect their fellow Americans. Let us also pray for the safety of our brave men and women in uniform and their families who serve and sacrifice for our country. Let us come together to pray for peace and goodwill today and in the days ahead as we work to meet the great challenges of our time.

The Congress, by Public Law 100–307, as amended, has called on the President to issue each year a proclamation designating the first Thursday in May as a “National Day of Prayer.”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2, 2013, as a National Day of Prayer. I join the citizens of our Nation in giving thanks, in accordance with our own faiths and consciences, for our many freedoms and blessings, and in asking for God's continued guidance, mercy, and protection.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand thirteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-seventh.

BARACK OBAMA

#### **Proclamation 8975 of May 3, 2013**

#### **National Charter Schools Week, 2013**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

America's success in the 21st century depends on what we do today to reignite the true engine of our economic growth: a thriving middle class. Achieving that vision means making sure our education system provides ladders of opportunity for our sons and daughters. We need to equip all our students with the education and skills that put them on the path to good jobs and a bright future—no matter where they live or what school they attend.

Charter schools play an important role in meeting that obligation. These learning laboratories give educators the chance to try new models and methods that can encourage excellence in the classroom and prepare more of our children for college and careers. In return for this flexibility, we should expect high standards and accountability, and make tough decisions

to close charter schools that are underperforming and not improving. But where charter schools demonstrate success and exceed expectations, we should share what they learn with other public schools and replicate those that produce dramatic results. Many charter schools choose to locate in communities with few high-quality educational options, making them an important partner in widening the circle of opportunity for students who need it most.

Our children are ready to write the next great chapter in the American story. As parents and teachers and citizens, it is up to all of us to provide them the tools they need to keep our country moving forward—from a degree that leads to a good job to the critical thinking skills that make our democracy thrive. This week, we recognize charter schools that are advancing those goals, and we recommit to helping our Nation's children go as far as their talents will take them.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 5 through May 11, 2013, as National Charter Schools Week. I commend our Nation's charter schools, teachers, and administrators, and I call on States and communities to support charter schools and the students they serve.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand thirteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-seventh.

BARACK OBAMA

#### **Proclamation 8976 of May 9, 2013**

### **Military Spouse Appreciation Day, 2013**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

As long as there have been courageous men and women willing to protect our Union and our ideals, there have been extraordinary spouses at their side—patriots in their own right who serve and sacrifice in ways many cannot fathom. They are moms and dads who take up the work of two during deployments, shuffling their careers and packing up their lives whenever our Nation calls. They are dedicated employees at our businesses, committed volunteers in our communities, and essential caretakers for our wounded warriors. America's military spouses are at the core of our Armed Forces, and on Military Spouse Appreciation Day, we celebrate their contributions to keeping our country safe.

Just as we are bound by a sacred obligation to care for our men and women in uniform, we are equally responsible for making sure their loved ones get the support they deserve. My Administration has taken steps to uphold that special trust, from investing in childcare and education for military families to providing mortgage assistance for military homeowners. Through First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden's Joining Forces initiative, we